

I also note that 24 States, nearly half the States in our Nation, have hate crime laws on the books that include sexual orientation, and religious leaders are not being prosecuted in those States.

That is not the purpose of the hate crimes law. Prosecutors aren't looking to put ministers in jail for their religious beliefs. To the contrary, the hate crimes bill will actually help religious communities. Understand, 20 percent of all hate crimes that are committed in the United States are committed on the basis of religion. This bill would eliminate the narrow requirements that currently prevent Federal prosecutors from bringing certain hate crimes cases motivated by religious bias.

Another criticism of the legislation is there is no need to pass a Federal hate crimes law because some States are already doing it on their own. This argument is similar to one we faced before. Almost a century ago, when Congress debated an antilynching law between 1881 and 1964, almost 5,000 people were lynched in the United States. The victims were mostly—but not exclusively—African American. Yet Congress resisted addressing this problem for generations. Criminal law is primarily a State and local function. I understand that. An estimated 95 percent of prosecutions for crimes occur at that level. But in some areas of criminal law, the Federal Government can and should step in to help.

We have 4,000 Federal criminal laws, 600 of which have been passed in the last 10 years. Hate crimes are a sad and tragic reality in America. The killing this past summer of an African-American security guard at the Holocaust Museum here in Washington, DC, was a reminder that hate-motivated violence still plagues our Nation.

Earlier this year, in my home State of Illinois, two White men in the town of Joliet used a garbage can to beat a 43-year-old Black man outside a gas station, while yelling racial epithets and stating: "This is for Obama." The victim sustained serious injuries, lacerations, and bruises to his head.

Just 2 weeks ago, in Springfield, in my hometown, three University of Illinois students were arrested for viciously beating and punching two men while yelling antigay slurs at them.

These are incidents in my home State, a State I am proud to represent, but I am not proud of this criminal conduct, and I don't think America should be proud of it.

According to FBI data, based on voluntary reporting, there are 8,000 hate crimes annually in America. Some experts think the number is closer to 50,000. The hate crimes bill would not eliminate hate crimes, but it will help ensure these crimes do not go unpunished.

In closing, I wish to quote the words of Senator Kennedy when he introduced the hate crimes bill in April. This is what he said:

It has been over 10 years since Matthew Shepard was left to die on a fence in Wyoming because of who he was. It has also been 10 years since this bill was initially considered by Congress. In those 10 years, we have gained the political and public support that is needed to make this bill into law. Today, we have a President who is prepared to sign hate crimes legislation into law, and a Justice Department that is willing to enforce it. We must not delay the passage of this bill. Now is the time to stand up against hate-motivated violence and recognize the shameful damage it has done to our Nation.

We will honor the memory and legacy of Senator Edward Kennedy by passing this Defense authorization conference report, which includes the hate crimes law language. We need to send this to President Obama, who has promised he will sign it into law. I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this important legislation.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### TRIBUTE TO REV. AND MRS. MELVIN SANDERS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today to honor Rev. Melvin Sanders and his wife Emma Sanders for 40 years of service to the Las Vegas community. Mr. SANDERS and his wife moved to Las Vegas, NV, from Arizona in 1954. Mr. and Mrs. Sanders entered the business field successfully and have remained involved for over 40 years.

Reverend Sanders and Emma Sanders are known all over Las Vegas for their generosity and warmth toward their neighbors. He and his wife assisted multiple families in financial need and have also provided ministerial and spiritual outreach to the people of the Las Vegas Valley. The Sanders are known as Mom and Dad to literally hundreds of Nevadans. Reverend Sanders and his beloved wife have been married for 57 years and are the proud parents of six children, one of whom tragically preceded them in death. The Sanders' church has been in existence for 40 years.

The House of Holiness Church has been open to its congregation for 40 years, and may best be described as a vibrant and joyful place of worship. The church has Sunday school, afternoon service, evening service, prayer

and Bible band as well as Bible study. The House of Holiness may best be described by a verse of Scripture which attests "Holiness becometh thine house o Lord for ever." It is clear that Reverend Sanders and his wife are holy people who try to live as lights for God in our world.

President Obama once said "Focusing your life solely on making a buck shows a certain poverty of ambition. It asks too little of yourself. Because it's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you realize your true potential." This ideal is exemplified by Reverend Sanders and Emma, as together they serve others and help make Nevada a better place. Whether it be through their volunteer efforts with the Salvation Army or by way of their many other selfless endeavors, the Sanders help to better their community.

The Sanders and the House of Holiness Church have a bright future on their horizon. I congratulate the Sanders on 57 years of loving marriage and 40 years of saintly service to the Las Vegas community.

#### HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

CAPTAIN BENJAMIN A. SKLAVER

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I wish pay tribute to CPT Benjamin A. Sklaver, U.S. Army, of Hamden, CT, who died of injuries sustained when an improvised explosive device detonated near his dismounted patrol in Murcheh, Afghanistan, on October 2, 2009.

Captain Sklaver was assigned to Headquarters Company, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, U.S. Army Reserve, of Greensboro, NC.

Ben Sklaver was a remarkable young man. He lived not only as a true patriot and defender of our Nation's principles of freedom and justice but as a compassionate ambassador of good will and humanitarian assistance to thousands in need.

Though he was called "Captain" by those soldiers around him, he was known as "Moses Ben" to thousands of Ugandans who now have clean water thanks to Ben's efforts. After serving in Africa and being struck by the number of deaths and illnesses resulting from dirty drinking water, he returned home and founded ClearWater Initiative. In the short time since its inception, with the aid of his parents Laura and Gary, ClearWater Initiative constructed wells for more than 6,500 people, primarily in northern Uganda.

Captain Sklaver served as a messenger of high justice and idealism in the best tradition of American principles and patriotism. Our Nation extends its heartfelt condolences to his mother and father, Laura and Gary Sklaver, his brother Samuel, sister Anna, and fiancée Beth, whom I have known since she was a baby because she is the daughter of my dear friends Jim and Barbara Segaloff.

To Ben's family and the people he touched during his life, we extend our